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## Political Reception US Government

The Mickey Leland Papers & Collection Addendum. (Texas Southern University, 2015)

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USC-E

# 9 Texas freshmen sworn in

Post Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — A record crop of nine freshmen from Texas — six in their 30s — took the oath of office Monday as new members of the 96th Congress.

Uniformly they celebrated their new status with an almost endless round of receptions and parties, which just as endlessly were packed with supporters from back home and other well-wishers.

The nine new House members from Texas, the largest number to enter Congress together in this century, are Republicans Ron Paul of Lake Jackson and Thomas Loeffler of Kerrville and Democrats Mickey Leland of Houston, Joe Wyatt of Bloomington, Martin Frost of Dallas, W. Philip Gramm of College Station, Charles Stenholm of Stamford, Marvin Leath of Marlin and Kent Hance of Lubbock.

Not all the freshmen are authentic newcomers, however. Paul served in Congress for about nine months in 1976, for instance; Loeffler is a former White House lobbyist in the Ford administration; Wyatt once worked on the staffs of two congressmen and Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson and Leath is an ex-aide to former Rep. W.R. Poage, D-Texas.

The election of the nine new members — six inherited their seats through retirements and three beat incumbents — also signaled a profound change in their state's once awesome power on Capitol Hill.

The nine former Texas members who gave up their seats Monday had an accumulated 191 years of seniority, including two committee chairmanships and four subcommittee chairmanships.

Sixteen veteran Texans — Republican Sen. John G. Tower and 15 holdover House members — re-elected last fall — also were sworn in Monday.

But most of the attention was focused on the freshmen.

Loeffler, at 32 years old the youngest of the new group, was the guest at a jammed, lavish buffet reception at the Capitol Hill Club, a posh Republican watering hole. Despite his youth, the party had something of a welcome-home flavor to it: the Loefflers spent seven years in Washington and never sold their home here.

There was a quieter, more sedate party to honor Leath, at age 57 the oldest of the first-term Texans. The crowd there was liberally sprinkled with old-time expatriate Texans now more or less permanent Washingtonians, many dating back to the days of the Johnson presidency or even to the era when LBJ was Senate majority leader and Sam Rayburn the House Speaker.

Probably the biggest, most enthusiastic turnout was at a reception hosted by 12-year congressional veteran Bob Eckhardt for his new Democratic colleague from Houston, Mickey Leland.

Leland, remembering his days as an impoverished black child in the Houston ghetto, recited aloud a poem he wrote about the torment of racial minorities in America, ending with an exhortation for the country to "wake up" and face its problems. Later, in a brief speech, Leland said he had "come to Congress to fight like hell for the people."

Eckhardt's party for Leland also was attended by House Majority Whip John Brademas, D-Ind.; U.S. Treasurer Azie Morton, Reps. Morris Udall, D-Ariz., and Richardson Preyer, D-N.C.; and the new dean of the Texas delegation, Democratic Rep. Jack Brooks of Beaumont.

Noting Leland is both young (35) and black, Brooks cackled to the audience, "Make him a woman and let him join the Jewish church and we could elect him speaker tomorrow."



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Rep. Mickey Leland, D-Houston, takes oath in Washington

## Leland focus of attention at opening-day bash

BY CRAGG HINES  
Chronicle Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Elegant guests, some dressed in fur, dipped strawberries into powdered sugar and whipped cream and listened to Rep. Mickey Leland, D-Houston, recite a rage-filled poem he wrote 10 years ago "when I was a feisty black guy."

It ends, "Wake up, America. Wake up." As Leland finished the piece, some of the guests murmured the ritual "Right on," and others set down their glasses of white wine to applaud Leland's protest against war and poverty.

Leland was the object of a lot of attention Monday as he was sworn in as a new member of the U.S. House to succeed Barbara C. Jordan. Her name was barely mentioned at a reception given for Leland by Rep. and Mrs. Bob Eckhardt, the Houston Democrats who had given Miss Jordan a similar sendoff six years ago.

The opening-day celebration was generally quieter for the other eight first-term members from Texas.

Unlike Leland's bash, held in a cavernous committee room, Rep. Ron Paul, R-Lake Jackson, hosted a small reception in his office.

Paul, who was in the House about nine months in 1976 following a special election, found the festivities "less exciting this time."

Before he was the only member taking the oath; this time there were more than 420 of the 433 House members all standing to be sworn in by re-elected Speaker Thomas P. O'Neill.

On the Senate side, without so much as a party to call his own, Sen. John G. Tower, R-Texas, was sworn in for his fourth six-year term.

Tower was unanimously re-elected chairman of the Senate Republican Policy Committee after an apparently doomed challenge by Sen. John C. Danforth of Missouri collapsed over the weekend.

Tower dropped by a reception at the Capitol Hill Club, the watering hole of the Republican National Committee, given for one of his former employees, new

Rep. Thomas G. Loeffler, R-Hunt.

Loeffler and Paul are the two new Republican members of the Texas delegation. Their election last fall gives the party four of the state's 24 House seats. Paul defeated former Rep. Bob Gammage, D-Houston, who had unseated Paul in the 1976 general election. Loeffler replaced former Rep. Robert C. Krueger, D-New Braunfels, who quit to run against Tower.

Although much of the day was spent partying, O'Neill in a brief speech reminded members of some of the tough issues the Congress — especially Democrats — face: to control inflation without higher unemployment; to provide adequate health care to all Americans without generating unacceptable budget deficits.

House Republican Leader John J. Rhodes recalled the anti-spending theme of many congressional campaigns last fall.

"So many of you on my right (Democrats) were elected on Republican principles," Rhodes, of Arizona, said. "Welcome to the brotherhood of fiscal conservatives." He promised to give Democrats "many opportunities to put your vote where your rhetoric was."

Leadership elections went as expected, except for the defeat of Sen. Orrin G. Hatch of Utah whom many thought would be elected chairman of the Republican

Senate Campaign Committee, a group which hands out millions of dollars to party candidates.

Hatch, a conservative with national ambitions lost by one vote to liberal Sen. H. John Heinz of Pennsylvania.

New Rep. Kent Hance, D-Lubbock, hosted a breakfast for about 40 of his West Texas supporters.

Before the House session opened, all seven new Democrats hosted a reception, replete with a full bar. It's even too early for me," said four-term Rep. Charles Wilson, D-Luffkin. It was not too early for many of the guests from Texas.

Seating was very limited at the official swearing-in, so a number of visiting Texans watched on closed-circuit television.

What the television didn't show, however, was the Romper Room air given to the House chamber by the large number of members' children who accompanied their parents.

New Rep. J. Martin Frost, D-Dallas, lost hold of one of his daughters, Mariel, almost 2 years old, and chased her down the middle aisle of the House.

Even bachelor Leland, one of five blacks sworn in Monday, took on to the floor Martin Jefferson, son of Houston attorney and former judge Andrew Jefferson.

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